

Submission from Cardinia Ratepayers & Residents Association to the Logical Inclusions process particularly with reference to inclusions put forward by Cardinia Shire Council and individual land owners, being east of Pakenham and to the north of the overhead transmission lines, as shown on the map provided by Council.

It is our strong and considered view that there is no need for the proposed expansion of the current Urban Growth Boundary beyond Ryan Road and north of the transmission lines.

We do not accept the rationale that there is need for additional housing to be developed in Cardinia Shire at the present time . The rate of development both north and south of Princes Highway between Officer and Pakenham is producing an enormous quantity of available housing and the planned VicUrban development in Officer, soon to begin, will further contribute a very large supply of dwellings in addition to those already under construction.

The Cardinia Lakes development east of Army Road and to the north of Princes Highway continues to expand and there is much land yet to be built on as part of that development.

To the west of Army Road through the Kennedy Creek area to Ahern Road and north to transmission lines, there has been massive development on available sites which is delivering further available housing.

An independent study conducted earlier this year indicated that there was actually a surplus of housing above requirement in the Cardinia Shire urban growth area.

Therefore we see no justification for the proposed inclusion of land currently outside the urban growth boundary except for the impetus of certain property developers and a small number of individual land owners who want the opportunity to realise anticipated profit on real estate investment. This is not justifiable reason for such expansion which will be of no benefit to the wider community in Cardinia Shire at the present time.

It should be noted that a former Cardinia Shire CEO and representative on the 2005 Smart Growth Committee is now Development Manager for Parklea, a company referred to in Council submission as being ready to proceed with development to the east of Ryan Road if the proposed Logical Inclusion is approved. This is viewed with some concern by members of our Committee and could be regarded as a questionable conflict of interest requiring closer examination.

We believe that it is irresponsible of Cardinia Shire Council to have submitted a logical inclusion proposal for the 445 hectares of land in question as we observe that Council already is under great financial stress in coping with the demands for services and infrastructure for current development and population growth between Pakenham and Beaconsfield. Council debt is high and cannot be reduced while the pressure to provide for growth expenditure is constant. Continuing annual rates increase is becoming more unacceptable to the community especially among rural ratepayers who are not receiving adequate return for rates paid due to Council spending on major projects in the growth corridor. It should be

noted that Cardinia Shire is presently over eighty percent rural and the need for better maintenance of road and drainage infrastructure is a serious ongoing concern put forward by ratepayers and residents.

Six families per day are estimated to be moving into Cardinia Shire, most of whom will be settling in the urban residential precincts. Pakenham central business activity and commercial centre is close to gridlock for two thirds of the business week and at peak shopping times adequate carparking is virtually unavailable. With current approved housing development, such congestion will increase and it is therefore difficult to envisage a whole new precinct to the east coming online to integrate with an over-crowded Pakenham CBD which is already up to manageable capacity.

The Council submission refers to the Princes Highway being low in traffic volume since the Princes Freeway bypass was established in 2005. This was the case initially, but current local experience and consensus is that traffic on the Princes Highway has now almost returned to its former volume.

Social disadvantage is increasingly evident as the local Four C's Crisis Relief Centre provided assistance with food and other needs to 26,000 last year and this year is anticipating at least 30,000 to be requiring help and support. The centre has lately made a public appeal for donations as the requests for assistance have been above expectation.

Pre-school or kindergarten places in the urban growth district reached full capacity this year and Council has had to advise parents in the urban districts to consider enrolling children in the rural pre-schools, as far out as Garfield, Bunyip, Cockatoo or Gembrook.

Council has described the land proposed as average farmland. However, from an environmental aspect, the land in question, particularly to the north of Princes Highway, has a myriad of creeks and waterways including Deep Creek coming through from the northern hills and there is much native vegetation and habitat, flora and fauna to be considered, including growling grass frogs and possible southern brown bandicoot activity which has been the subject of recent community studies and focus. Under the Logical Inclusions proposal, these environmental features and assets will be lost under concrete and bitumen and Deep Creek will inevitably become contaminated with urban stormwater and drainage as has happened through Pakenham and Kennedy Road development.

Government policy has designated the growth areas for concentrated urban development. However, it is evident that Cardinia Shire has presently reached the stage of full capacity and inability to cope with financial, social and environmental pressures is increasing. There is no genuine need for the land in question to be included in the urban growth area. It would be more valuable to the wider community as fresh, green open space. Therefore we strongly recommend the Advisory Committee look carefully at these factors and pressures when considering the Logical Inclusions submission put forward by the Cardinia Shire Council and certain land owners.

Gloria O'Connor
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14th August 2011.